

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 08111 311539Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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O P 311455Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0196
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LOME PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 8111

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, CG, FR, BE, US, UK, GW, MO, SG, IV, GB, TO
SUBJ: PARIS MEETING ON AFRICAN FORCES IN SHABA

REF: A. STATE 218255; B. ABIDJAN 7788

1. WE AGREE THAT THE FIVE AFRICAN COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING
IN THE SHABA FORCE SHOULD BE CONSULTED IN ADVANCE ON
THE RANGE OF SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED BY THE SESTERN
COUNTRIES AT THE PARIS MEETING (REF A). BUT WE THINK
IT IMPORTANT, AND PRUDENT, TO GO EVEN FURTHER; THE
WESTERN DISCUSSANTS SHOULD LET THE AFRICANS KNOW, AS
AN INTEGRAL PART OF THESE ADVANCE CONSULTATIONS, OF
THEIR INTENTION TO HOLD THE PARIS MEETING AND SHOULD
SEEK AFRICAN VIEWS ON A SCENARIO FOR SUBSEQUENT CON-
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SULTATIONS. THAT EVENTUAL SCENARIO COULD CONSIST MERELY
OF POST-PARIS BRIEFINGS OR SOME VARIANT OF THE TWO-
TIER APPROACH (REF B). PERHAPS IT MIGHT BE FIRMLY
DECIDED UPON ONLY AFTER AN INITIAL ROUND OF POST-PARIS
BRIEFINGS. THE CRUCIAL POINT IS THAT THE AFRICANS SHOULD
NOT ONLY SHARE IN THE DECISION MAKING, BUT ALSO PER-
CEIVE THAT THEY ARE BEING PERMITTED TO STRUCTURE EVENTS

TO MEET THEIR POLITICAL/PRESENTATIONAL NEEDS AND DESIRES.

2. AS TO THE MANNER OF CONSULTATIONS (WHICH COULD VARY AMONG THE FIVE AFRICAN CAPITALS):

A. WE FAVOR A JOINT US-FRENCH APPROACH, WITH THE FRENCH SERVING AS PRIMARY SPOKESMAN. THIS WOULD HELP ENSURE THAT THE USG AND GOF WERE MOVING ON THE SAME TRACK, WHILE STILL MAINTAINING THE APPEARANCE OF THE FRENCH TAKING THE LEAD.

B. OUR SECOND CHOICE WOULD BE AN APPROACH BY THE FRENCH ALONE. THIS WOULD HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF CLEARLY KEEPING THE FRENCH OUT FRONT, WITH THE USG PRESENTING A MINIMAL PROFILE TO THE AFRICANS. POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES WOULD BE 1) WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MONITOR AS CAREFULLY AS WE MIGHT LIKE WHAT THE FRENCH ACTUALLY SAY AND HEAR, AND 2) THE U.S. PROFILE TO THE AFRICANS MIGHT BE EVEN LOWER THAN THAT WHICH WE MIGHT WANT TO MAINTAIN.

C. WE BELIEVE AN APPROACH BY ALL FIVE WESTERN POWERS WOULD BE TOO CUMBERSOME, WOULD INVOLVE GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE PLAYED NO SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE SHABA OPERATION, AND BY ITS TANGIBLE VISIBILITY ALONE (FIVE FLAG-BEARING CMD VEHICLES APPEARING JOINTLY AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IN EACH OF THE FIVE AFRICAN CAPITALS) WOULD HELP EVAPORATE WHATEVER CHANGE MIGHT HAVE EXISTED FOR KEEPING THE FACT OF THE CONSULTATIONS SECRET.
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